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INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7789
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RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5721
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2098
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2007

In Today's Papers

Gul Continues Talks in the US

All papers report in his meeting with Vice President Dick Cheney, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul raised the topics of Armenian genocide claims and the fight against the PKK. Sabah reports that using a map, Gul showed Cheney Turkey's key location on energy and security corridors, warning the VP that losing Turkey would be very costly for the US. Turkey wanted concrete moves against the PKK "in the coming days," Gul said, asking that the referendum planned in Kirkuk be postponed.

Papers report Gul and Rice held a 30-minute meeting before the Turkish and the US delegations came together at a working lunch. Rice stressed at the lunch that the US administration had been "mobilized" to block the Armenian genocide bill at the US Congress. The US is aware of the significance of the PKK question, Rice said, urging Turkey to be patient. Cumhuriyet reports Gul as saying, "I could see that Americans were really embarrassed regarding the PKK issue. I saw a very serious attitude on the US side, soon there will be productive developments which will meet our expectations."

Papers say the leading Jewish groups Gul met with Monday were discomfited with Turkey criticizing Israel. Gul asserted that Turkey aimed to broker peace in the Middle East through talks such as the ones with Hamas. He added Turkey has narrowed ties with Hamas. The Jewish representatives promised Gul to do all to block the Armenian genocide bill, according to papers.

Several papers report US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi denied Gul an appointment, saying she was too busy this week, but showed up in a women's meeting in the hotel where Gul stays. Papers say Pelosi evading Gul was "a scandal."

Dink Murder Investigation, 'Deep State' Debates
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Yeni Safak

and others report Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu has approved a request of his ministry inspectors probing the Hrant Dink assassination for initiating investigation against Istanbul police chief Celalettin Cerrah. Former Trabzon police chief Ramazan Akyurek, currently police intelligence chief, was also interrogated by inspectors. Milliyet and Radikal say although both the police and gendarme were aware of Yasin Hayal's plans to kill Hrant Dink, the Armenian writer was not warned. Cumhuriyet believes the Dink assassination was conducted by "professionals."

Prime Minister Erdogan said his government will not tolerate those violating laws "to protect national interests." Erdogan, speaking at an AK Party gathering said that "negative nationalism" is the most harmful thing to the country, the "greatest crime" that people can commit against the state. On the controversial issue of the "deep state," the PM said, "We can describe it as gangs inside a state organization."

Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal said Erdogan had the top responsibility in the Dink killing, calling on him to "keep his hands out" the security cadres and resign. The far-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahceli said Erdogan was "pathologic," and that he spoke the same language as the PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan. ANAP leader Erkan Mumcu accused Erdogan of "paving the path" to a division among state institutions, and of using religion as a political tool.

Meanwhile, even after his death, a lawsuit that had been filed against Dink based on Article 301 continues. On Tuesday, Dink's trial was put off to June because his death has not been reported to the court yet, papers report.

On reform of Article 301, AKP deputy chairman Dengir Mir Mehmet

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Firat said the changes offered by NGOs to Turkish Penal Code Article 301 cannot help solve problems, but will lead to increases in lawsuits filed through the controversial provision.

Editorial Commentary on Article 301, Iran

Kursat Bumin argues in the Islamist-opinion maker Yeni Safak: "The argument that 'other countries have laws similar to Turkey's 301' has become common rhetoric. Yet we should wonder to what extent this argument reflects the reality? I find this claim to be baseless, and the court ruling against Hrant Dink and the High Court of Appeals ruling were equally baseless. Recently one expert, during a television appearance, even listed the countries which supposedly have laws on freedom of expression very similar to Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code: Italy, Poland, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden and Austria. It is easy to take the experts' word for it, but I personally continued my research and examined the laws that some claim are similar to our 301. Surprisingly enough, none of the listed countries have anything which we can call similar to 301. There is only one similarity which comes from the Bulgarian penal code, and Bulgaria is not even mentioned in that list. Bulgarian Penal Code Article 88 talks about punishing insults 'against the pride of Bulgarian people.' Again when it comes to the other seven countries, they don't have anything to support the claim that 'others, not only Turkey, have laws like 301.' To cut a long story short, why don't we see the Turkish translation of those laws that supposedly look like our penal code? This is the only way to end the argument and reach a consensus on the issue."

Kamuran Ozbir states in the nationalist Ortadoğu: "Even though Washington denied the interpretations of President Bush's speech on January 10 as a sign of an upcoming strike against Iran, nowadays a lot of officials are talking about the shift of the US focus from Iraq to Iran. The new Secretary of Defense calls Iran the main target for the American military presence in the Gulf. The US press also started a new bombardment to persuade public opinion that Iran is the new enemy. The Bush administration is now staging the same tactic against Iran that was applied against Saddam Hussein -- when everybody was persuaded that there was a link between Saddam and al-Qaeda. For instance, the raid by American forces on an Iranian diplomatic representation office was presented as 'Iranians planning an attack against the US.' The Bush administration seems determined

to fool the American people once again. Both Israel and the neo-cons in the administration are in favor of an attack against Iran. It may seem odd that the Bush administration still plans to attack another Muslim country despite the fact that it will only deepen the already existing problems with Iraq and the region. But for Washington the psychology is different. President Bush and his administration believe that a triumph over Iran can make the Iraq defeat forgotten."

President Sezer Partially Vetoes Oil Law

All papers report that President Sezer vetoed several provisions of the Oil Law explaining that the given provisions necessitate further negotiations. In the justification of the veto, President Sezer said that with clauses paving the way for the state's transfer of authority and rights to foreign companies, Turkey's national security interests are disregarded.

Operations against the PKK in Europe

Sabah, Milliyet, Hurriyet, Radikal and others: Following France, Belgium started an operation against the PKK yesterday. Sabah reports that a high level PKK official Canan Kurtyilmaz was sent to Paris and former DEP deputies Zubeyir Aydar and Remzi Kartal were interrogated in Belgium.

Two Important Signatures for the F-35 Project

Milliyet, Aksam, Star, Zaman and others: Considered the biggest procurement program in the Defense Industry, two agreements were signed in Ankara yesterday for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Project. In an agreement worth \$3 billion with American firm

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Northrop Grumman, Turkish Aerospace Industry (TAI) will be producing the centre part of the F-35s as the single source after the USA. The second agreement was signed between the Turkish Defense Industry and the main producer of F-35s, American firm Lockheed Martin. Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul and US Ambassador Ross Wilson attended the ceremony.

TV Highlights

NTV (6 A.M.)

Domestic News

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- Prime Minister Erdogan met with visiting Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to discuss the steps to end fighting between Israel and Palestine as well as in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine.

- Turkish ministers of energy, environment and farming said after meeting yesterday they will submit a report on the effects of global warming to the council of ministers meeting next week. The ministers mainly discussed the possibility of a drought in Turkey this year.

- The third Turkey-US Economic Partnership Commission (EPC) meetings will be held in Ankara and Istanbul on February 8-9.

International News

- The Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (IKDP) website says at the end of the month multinational forces will transfer security responsibility in northern Iraq to the Kurdish peshmerge.

- Nicosia said it will announce international bids for oil exploration in eastern Mediterranean on February 15, defying Turkish and Turkish Cyprus reactions.

- Greek Cypriots have asked India and China for an explanation on how a payload of energy-saving light bulbs was flown directly from China via India into north Cyprus over the weekend.

- Tehran blamed the US for the abduction of an Iranian diplomat by gunmen wearing Iraqi army uniforms in central Baghdad. A US military spokesman denied any US or Iraqi involvement in the

incident.

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

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